

IF I HAVE A BUSINESS PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

Call the Aboriginal Business Canada office or External Delivery Organization nearest you and ask to speak to a development officer who will provide further information and discuss your plans with you. If the idea appears to fit our criteria, we will provide you with a "Statement of Intent" form. Submission of this form begins the application process.

ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CANADA OFFICES

Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
235 Queen Street
OTTAWA, Ontario
K1A 0H5
Phone: (613) 954-4064
Fax: (613) 957-7010
Internet: <http://abc.gc.ca>

ONTARIO
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
3rd Floor, 151 Yonge Street
TORONTO, Ontario
M5C 2W7
Phone: (416) 973-8800
Fax: (416) 973-2255

ATLANTIC
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
4th Floor, 1801 Hollis Street
P.O. Box 940, Station M
HALIFAX, Nova Scotia
B3J 2V9
Phone: (902) 426-2018
Fax: (902) 426-1643

Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
c/o Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada Office
1760 Regent Street South
SUDBURY, Ontario
P3E 3Z8
Phone: (705) 522-5100
Fax: (705) 677-7976

QUEBEC/NUNAVUT
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
Suite 2604
800 Tour de la Place Victoria
P.O. Box 289
MONTREAL, Quebec
H4Z 1E8
Phone: (514) 283-1828
Fax: (514) 283-1843

MANITOBA
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
4th Floor
400 St. Mary Avenue
WINNIPEG, Manitoba
R3C 4K5
Phone: (204) 983-7316
Fax: (204) 983-4107

SASKATCHEWAN
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
7th Floor
123 - 2nd Avenue South
SASKATOON, Saskatchewan
S7K 7E6
Phone: (306) 975-4329
Fax: (306) 975-5334

ALBERTA
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
Canada Place
Room 725, 9700 Jasper Avenue
EDMONTON, Alberta
T5J 4C3
Phone: (403) 495-2954
Fax: (403) 495-4172

BRITISH COLUMBIA/YUKON
Aboriginal Business Canada
Industry Canada
21st Floor
300 West Georgia Street
VANCOUVER,
British Columbia
V6B 6E2
Phone: (604) 666-3871
Fax: (604) 666-0238

EXTERNAL DELIVERY ORGANIZATIONS

A number of Aboriginal business organizations across the country also deliver program services.

For a list of these organizations, please call your nearest Aboriginal Business Canada office.

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ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CANADA provides business services and support to Canadian Aboriginal peoples. This pamphlet describes how we work with you, what we look for and how we can help your business succeed through innovation.

Many Aboriginal firms are being innovative and using technology to achieve success. These firms are growing and creating new job opportunities. Aboriginal Business Canada is helping to increase the number of such innovative firms and assisting others to use technology to be more competitive. The following information describes how we can work with you in such activities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPORT?

Canadian status and non-status Indians, Inuit and Métis individuals, associations, partnerships or other legal entities, on or off reserve, are eligible. In general, majority Aboriginal ownership is required. Exceptions may be made for joint ventures.

DO I HAVE TO BE A "HIGH-TECH" COMPUTER COMPANY TO BENEFIT FROM THIS SUPPORT?

No, but you probably are using a computer already if you are interested in innovation!

One of the targets of this initiative is the growing number of Aboriginal "high knowledge" companies. These include a wide range of businesses that integrate new technology and expertise into their processes, relying on human resources to provide products and services. Firms involved in communications and electronics, engineering services, software development and business services are examples of such companies.

Productivity improvement is another objective of this initiative. Arts and crafts producers and tourism operators, for instance, are using the Internet to market their products. Computerized inventory and

cost-control systems, accounting and reporting systems, customer communications and entrepreneurial skills development are all examples of adapting technology to existing businesses in order to improve profitability.

Development of new products, processes and services is also an important activity.

Where computer connections and expertise are not available, Aboriginal Business Canada is supporting a limited number of projects to extend the "Information Highway" to improve access to it by Aboriginal companies.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DOES ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CANADA PROVIDE FOR INNOVATION ACTIVITIES?

Financial support is available for:

- Establishment or expansion of businesses in "high knowledge" sectors. Support for business planning, marketing and business advisory services is also available for these firms.
- Development of new products and processes (with commercial applications).
- Diagnostic assessments of company operations to develop implementation plans for technology-based enhancements. Support is available across all sectors.
- Implementation of technology, including Internet technology, that improves a firm's competitiveness.
- Development of "value-added" technological capabilities within a firm, which diversify products offered and improve services related to the firm's core business.
- Analysis and development of improved processes to meet key quality standards, such as those put forward by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
- Costs associated with entering into a joint venture where there is significant potential to acquire technology and skills related to the management of that technology.

Note: Routine upgrading of equipment and office automation projects, which do not represent a significant change to the business, are ineligible for financial support as "Innovation" initiatives.

APART FROM FINANCIAL SUPPORT, WHAT OTHER SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Aboriginal Business Canada provides support to Aboriginal individuals and organizations to undertake initiatives that have broad application, and that can increase the participation of Aboriginal businesses in today's innovation-based and global economy. These activities help build business capacity, identify development opportunities and improve the climate for Aboriginal businesses.

We can refer you to key contacts, such as members of the Canadian Technology Network. We can also introduce you to other technology/innovation support programs and services, a good example being Technology Partnerships Canada, which is designed to encourage research and development and high-technology projects in Canada.

We offer access to a wide range of information resources, including business planning guides and entrepreneurship development tools in video and CD-ROM formats. We can also help you navigate Industry Canada's on-line business information source, *Strategis* (<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>), the largest business Web site in Canada, or the *Spirit of Aboriginal Enterprise* (<http://sae.ca>), a Web site dedicated to Aboriginal business.

IF I AM ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS THE CLIENT?

You need to have a minimum of 15 percent cash equity in the eligible costs of the proposed venture. This may increase depending on your financial capacity to bear more of the costs.

You must be actively involved in running the business and the business must demonstrate that it can support an appropriate salary.

WHAT FINANCING CAN ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CANADA OFFER?

Each proposal is assessed on its own commercial viability and merits, and the decision about our investment takes into account the overall financial package you have assembled. You should discuss this in detail with an Aboriginal Business Canada development officer.

The maximum contribution for innovation proposals is 60 percent of eligible capital and operating costs; in most cases, the contribution will be significantly lower.

Up to 75 percent of the eligible costs of business planning and business support requirements is also available.

IS THERE A MAXIMUM CONTRIBUTION?

Yes. The maximum contribution to individuals, or privately-owned businesses is \$75 000. Contributions to community-owned businesses may exceed this amount where it can be demonstrated that there are strategic benefits resulting from the project which exceed normal commercial benefits.

Note: Contributions are tailored to the requirements of the business. You should talk to your development officer to determine the level of support that may be available for your venture.

DO I HAVE TO REPAY THIS FUNDING?

In general, no. Contributions under \$75 000 to commercial enterprises are non-repayable.

How can I obtain more information?

For additional information, please call any of the offices listed in this pamphlet or contact us through our Web site at <http://abc.gc.ca>

Note: This material is provided for general information purposes only. Specific details concerning eligibility and program criteria should be discussed with a development officer.